



Pratidhwani the Echo

A Peer-Reviewed International Journal of Humanities & Social Science

ISSN: 2278-5264 (Online) 2321-9319 (Print)

Impact Factor: 6.28 (Index Copernicus International)

Volume-VI, Issue-III, January 2018, Page No. 175-179

Published by Dept. of Bengali, Karimganj College, Karimganj, Assam, India

Website: <http://www.thecho.in>

Propagation of Social Harmony in Barak valley by Sufi Personalities

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Abstract

Sufi's world is world of peace and harmony. Their mission is always service to mankind and worship only for Almighty, They believe in peace, tolerance and compassion. Hazrat Shah Adam Khaki, Mirul Arefin and Shah Natawan were one of the most renowned and revered sufi saints of Barak Valley. Their holy Dargahs at various places of Barak Valley are region- renowned spiritual centres. They had propagated the teachings of Islam and the teachings of real Sufism to the people of the Barak Valley and abroad. They spread the message of peace, love and tolerance to the mankind. The holy three Dargahs of the great Sufi saints of Barak Valley have a miraculous power to attract the people in large numbers, irrespective of faith and religion. These Dargahs reflects the true Sufi traditions. These centres of spiritualism promote region- peace, universal brotherhood, social harmony and tolerance. The marvelous teachings of Barak Valley Sufi saints for peace and social harmony have great relevance even today. Their message of peace is universal and meant for the whole mankind. This message is not confined to any particular community, society or country but it extends to the whole world. In fact, peace and love have no limitations; it cannot be enclosed within the boundary walls of any particular community, society or country but it should cross all borders and barriers and must reach the whole mankind.

Key words: *Sufi, Saints, Barak Valley, Social harmony.*

Introduction: According to scholars, Murray Titus – opines Sufism is an attitude of mind and heart towards Almighty and day to day problem of life. Sufism is one the most dynamic and interesting dimension of Islamic religious and cultural expression. Sufism or Mysticism is the basic of all religions. The term Sufi is coined from SUFFA (purity). The word Sufi (Suf) in Arabic means wool. Right from the times of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, there were persons who had discarded all worldly enjoyments and pleasures because of their sincerity and devotion in prayers and in

following the command of Almighty. They had simple living and used to wear wool i.e. Suf and were called as Sufi. Sufism is thus a path where salvation is obtained by continuous remembering and worshipping Almighty. Concentration in Sufism achieved either as a Almighty gift or by spiritual practices to remember Almighty in every breath. This require purity, the purity of body and soul which helps in developing the concentration. This increase his efficiency, concentration and aptitude and scientifically also proved if a man keeps his hand, face and feet, takes regular baths and wear clean clothes with no dirt he/she feels fresh and mentally cool. The theory of Sufism also explains the best way of approaching to Almighty is the love with His creatures; this approach recognizes service to humanity.

History of Sufism in Barak Valley: Sufism was inherent in Islam and these internal forces within Islam can not be isolated from the external factors. Sufi believes that Prophet Muhammad (SA) was a Sufi throughout his life. The practice of Sufism requires a strong relationship of teacher (master) with student (disciple) whoever is a teacher is a guide. He takes care of his disciple in every matter. After Prophet Muhammad (SA) the first Calipa (disciple) Hazrat Abu Bukkar Siddique taught the Sufis to renounce all their material goods for Islam and voluntarily adopt poverty. The second Calipa Hazrat Umar Farooq was a model of simplicity always wore a gown with patches. The third Calipa Hazrat Usman Goni was the best example in resignation to Allah during crisis. The fourth Calipa Hazrat Ali was a model for Sufis, thus Hazrat Ali regarded by Sufis as their leader or teacher in both theory and practice of Sufism, new centres of muslim culture came to existence where Sufism also reached its heights. Some of the most prominent Sufis of different places before Shah Jalal Mujarrad: Nizam Uddin, Moin Uddin Chisty, Hasan Basri, Rabia Basri, Shaqiq, Bayazid Bistami, Juned, Shibli, Abdul Qadir Jeelani, and Zunnun etc.

Onset of Sufism in Barak Valley: A formal history of the Sufism or mysticism in Barak Valley begins in 14th century A.D. after the conquest of Gaur by Sikandar Shah Ghazi accompanied by Shah Jalal Mujarrad in 1303A.D. At that time, Sylhet, along with Bengal was a class ridden society where weaker section was a victim of exploitation and torture. The message of social justice, equality and classless Islamic society brought by Hazrat Shah Jalal created a wave of conversion blowing throughout the Sylhet and Barak Valley. People embraced Islam village after village. Many saints amongst 360 companions accompanying Hazrat Shah Jalal Mujarrad spread Islam throughout the Barak Valley resulting conversion of large number of local people to Islam due to spiritual influence of Shah Badar Uddin, Shah Sikandar, Hazrat Shah Adam Khaki, Shah Zai Uddin, Shah Abdul Malik, Mirul Arefin and Shah Natawan etc.

It was by the overpowering spell and charm of their magnetic personalities, spiritual powers and exemplary conduct that they won the hearts of people of Sylhet

along with Barak Valley and thus laid the foundation of Islamic mysticism in this area. The word "Islam" means "peace" and "submission". In its religious sense it denotes submission to the will of Almighty and secular sense the establishment of peace. Sufi saints preached love among all classes of people. The lives of these humble and peaceful Sufi saints, who brought nothing with them except the name of Almighty Allah and the message of universal love, were exclusively dedicated to the cause of religious and enlightenment of the suffering humanity. As such they were naturally loved and respected by all classes and ranks of people from a peasant to a prince. They made Barak Valley their home, lived here and gloriously passed away in the service of mankind.

Social harmony in Barak Valley by Sufi Personalities: Hazrat Shah Adam Khaki, Mirul Arefin and Shah Natawan were a symbol of humanism. They were famous for their multifaceted personalities, as social reformers, leaders of Muslims and above all they were advocates for social harmony. They can also be called as ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity because of their love for all the community people in Barak Valley. They composed-"Hindu ki Mussalman, eke Allar farman. Amrar manot bhed bhan nai....." It means Hindu and Muslims are the creations of one God/Allah and there is no difference in our mind.

From time immemorial, Barak Valley has been the meeting place of diverse races and cultures. The soil of Barak Valley, alike other parts of India, also did not lag behind in welcoming the Sufis. It, moreover, proved fertile for the seed of Sufism. The arrival of some of the Sufis here and their activities are a historical fact. Sufism is a mystic cult popularly regarded as an offshoot of Islam, although some of its principles and practices are contrary to Islamic tenets. Sufism had bridged the gulf and spread the message of peace among various segments of society. Nothing could better prove or show the different stages through which Hindu-Muslim relations grew than Sufism or Bhakti movement. The most salutary effect of Sufism on Barak Valley's society was a social harmony. Sufism had both a lasting impact on the medieval society and a wider appeal to all the cross-sections of the society.

The Dargahs of Sufis even today attract a large number of devotees from all communities who visit these Dargahs regularly for fulfillment of their requirements/desires. Thus, the Dargahs promote social harmony. Therefore, there is a need to give a brief highlight about the three well known Sufis Dargahs in Barak Valley which established social harmony in the following way:

The Sufi saints who professed mysticism made contribution in their own way to the social, religious and cultural life of Barak Valley. One of the ideals of the Sufi saints was to strive for the abolition of all discriminations and inequalities from contemporary society. They received all men, rich and poor, Hindu-Muslim, free born and slaves in the same way. They served as socio-religious reformers in Barak Valley. One of their great achievements was that they brought the Muslims

aristocracy into touch with the Hindus. The Sufis could attract large masses towards them in Barak Valley because of their simple life. They served the poor, the distressed and the down-trodden. As Sufism was based on liberal principle, it attained fame among the Hindu religious people and Sufi saints became equally respectable to the Hindus and Muslims. They established Monasteries (khanqahs) which played a key role in maintaining the moral balance of the society in Barak Valley. Sufi saints advised the officials of high status to help the weak, the indigent and the needy persons irrespective of faith and religion.

Sufi saints taught people to cultivate the virtues of humanity, good disposition, tolerance, forgiveness and patience. They raised their voice against all vices such as drinking, gambling, slavery etc. They were instrumental in maintaining the social equilibrium of the medieval society of Barak Valley. They played an important role in shaping the character of the people and exercised immense influence upon the people and on account of them many Muslims and thousands of people became righteous. The Sufis played a significant role in the educational advancement of the audience, while in some Khanqahs became centers of knowledge and wisdom. Their religious discourses helped in the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the audience, while in some Khanqahs formal religious education was also imparted. From the very beginning, the Sufis realized the need of learning the regional languages of the Hindus so as to converse with them freely in their own dialect language. The Sufis were responsible for the spread of Muslim culture and Islam among the masses in the various parts of Barak Valley. They had their own way of getting new converts from the Hindu masses. The Islamic concept of equality and brotherhood of men attracted the lower classes of Hindus to their Khanqahs. There was no discrimination between the high and low, rich and poor in the Khanqahs and atmosphere which created among the people of Barak Valley to maintain Social harmony.

Conclusion: Sufi saints made Islam quite popular in Barak Valley. They tried to remove fanaticism between the Hindus and the Muslims and enhanced the feelings of humanity of love, tolerance and equality. They criticized and condemned the evil practices prevalent among the Hindus and Muslims and tried to purify the society of Barak Valley and established Social harmony. Moreover, Sufi saints have been a legacy to the rich diverse culture of Barak Valley.

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